



News Release

**U.S. Army Corps
of Engineers
Baltimore District
Raystown Lake**

Release Date: February 22, 2002

Contact: Dwight R. Beall

Phone: (814) 658-3405

**R.R. 1, Box 222
Hesston, PA 16647
FAX (814)658-3313**

Low water levels at Raystown Lake could result in the suspension of some boating activities

Hesston, Pa. - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, announced today that for the first time Raystown Lake, located in Huntingdon and Bedford counties, might be forced to close the lake to powerboats due to safety concerns as a result of the lake's low water levels.

"Water levels in the lake have dropped to the lowest in recent memory," said Dwight R. Beall, Operations Manager at Raystown. "Our four longest boat launches have less than four and a half feet of water covering the outermost ends. It takes about three feet of water to safely launch the average power boat, which only leaves a little more than a foot as a margin of safety."

In addition to the ramps becoming unsafe for launching boats, there is also the potential for underwater and hidden hazards, which increase dramatically when the lake reaches these levels added Beall.

During the lake's construction, obstructions and standing timber were cleared to allow for the top 21 feet of surface water (lake levels of between 765 to 786 feet) to be free of hazards. However, Corps officials point out that trees that may have topped out at 765 feet and remained standing after the lake was impounded with water in 1974, could pose a significant hazard to boating if the lake continues to drop.

According to Corps officials the normal elevation of Raystown Lake year round is 786 feet. As of 7 a.m. today the elevation was 774.25 feet. Current plans call for the lake to be closed to power boating if the lake should reach an elevation of 773 feet. To stabilize the elevation of the lake and keep it from dropping further, the Corps has decreased the amount of water released from the lake to amounts equal to the lake's minimum summer outflow of 200 cubic-feet-per-second or CFS. Typically, minimum water outflow from the lake in the winter is 480 CFS. Due to the lack of rainfall in the watershed, inflows of water into the lake have dropped to less than 300 CFS.

"The decision to reduce the minimum release from the lake was not made lightly," said Beall.

"Substantial coordination with other resource agencies as well as a documentation of the environmental considerations was done prior to reducing the outflow."

- more -

Raystown Lake Water Levels/2-2-2

Raystown Lake staff is preparing notification to early season fishing tournaments and campers informing them of the possible closure of the lake to powerboats. Two major marinas on the lake, Seven Points Marina and Lake Raystown Resort have also been notified of the potential powerboat restrictions and have been urged to prepare contingency plans for customers who use their facilities. Officials add that it is only the water-based activities that could be affected by the restrictions, campgrounds and picnic pavilions will remain open.

Under the current circumstances it would take a daily average of 1,700 CFS to return the lake to its normal recreation pool of 786 feet by April 1, which is typically the start of the boating season.

"In prior years when the lake has been low, we could count on the melting of an existing snow pack to replenish the water supply. This year we can not," said Beall.

The public can monitor the levels of the lake by visiting the Raystown Lake web site at <http://raystown.nab.usace.army.mil/>. Statistical information on lake conditions can also be obtained by calling the lake's automated information system at 814-658-3405 and following the prompts for lake statistics.